



BAY AREA
AIR QUALITY
MANAGEMENT
DISTRICT

Compliance and Enforcement Division

INCIDENT REPORT

**Tesoro Refinery (Site #B2758)
Martinez, CA
October 30, 2004**

On October 30, 2004, following a scheduled major maintenance turnaround, at about 12:00 pm, the Tesoro Refinery located in Martinez California, experienced a unit upset at the Coker Unit during the start-up of the unit. The upset caused a large black smoke plume to be emitted from the No. 5 Boiler stack. The refinery issued a level-2 emergency due to the potential for off-site/off property impact resulting from significant amounts of black smoke. Notification was made to the Contra Costa Health Services (CCHS) and the District. District Staff arrived on scene at 12:52 pm and the CCHS shortly thereafter. The District Inspector recorded a visible emission evaluation in excess of the visible emission standard.

Tesoro was in the process of heating up the Coker unit when it experienced problem with temperature controls causing black coke dust to carry out the No. 5 Boiler stack. At about 3:00 pm Tesoro shutdown the boiler and sent the Coker gas and coke dust directly to atmosphere. The winds during this incident were from the west-northwest at about 5-10 mph.

The District received six (6) complaints regarding smoke and odors as a result of this release. District staff at the scene detected no odors at ground level around the refinery. The Ground Level Monitors (GLM) located around the refinery did not record any excesses of hydrogen sulfide (H₂S) or sulfur dioxide (SO₂) resulting from the incident.

The District will continue to investigate the cause of this incident and take appropriate action as warranted. This report will be updated as new information becomes available.

UPDATE:

The grey/black plume from the # 5 Boiler stack was visible for three hours in the afternoon of October 30, 2004 until the unit could be shut down. As a result of the shut down, the refinery redirected coker gases to the atmosphere for 3 hours until the boiler could be brought up to stable operation. District staff observed and recorded excessive visible emissions from the boiler stack.

District staff further continued to investigate the cause of the incident and found it to be an issue associated with starting up the unit. To date District staff have issued 2 notices of violation to the refinery for the incident.

1. NOV A46754 – For an alleged violation of Regulation 1, Section 301: Public Nuisance related to fall-out.

2. NOV A46751 –For an alleged violation of Regulation 6, Section 301: Excessive visible emissions from the # 3 Crude Unit Furnace Stack

Notices of Violation issued by the District require immediate corrective action to bring the source into compliance and are subject to penalties pursuant to state law.

Note: A similar incident at the No. 5 boiler occurred on January 12, 2005. As a result of this later incident, the District filed an Accusation for a Conditional Order of Abatement against Tesoro on February 23, 2005, requesting that Tesoro cease operating the Coker Unit until Tesoro has an effective means for treating Coker flue gas emissions without causing opacity violations and public nuisance. On December 22, 2005, an Amended Stipulated Conditional Order of Abatement was adopted by the District Hearing Board. The Amended Stipulated Conditional Order of Abatement includes a coker modification as a method of controlling coker flue gas emissions. [Click here](#) to view the January 12, 2005 Incident Report.